

Publication of the *Censor*

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Article:

BONAMY DOBREE in *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century 1700-1740* (Oxford, 1959), perpetuated an earlier error in periodical history by referring to the *Censor* as 'papers contributed to *Mist's Weekly Journal*, 1717' (p. 688). The error seems to have originated in *Notes and Queries*, 7th ser., (1886), where C. Golding, C. A. Ward, and G.F.R.B. mistakenly suggested that the papers edited by Lewis Theobald appeared in Nathaniel Mist's *Weekly Journal; or, Saturday's Post* (215-16). However, the *Censor* was not published in Mist's *Journal*, though Theobald later wrote some essays for it.

The dates of these periodicals preclude the *Censor's* having been published by Mist. The *Censor* appeared three times weekly for thirty issues from 15 April until 17 June 1715 and again for sixty more issues from 1 January until 1 June 1717. Mist's *Journal* did not begin until 15 December 1716, eighteen months after the *Censor's* first series, and as a weekly, could not have published the thrice-weekly papers, even in 1717. Examination of Mist's *Journal* for January-June 1717 confirmed the deduction that Mist did not publish the *Censor*.

In fact, internal references in the *Censor* imply that the papers were published separately, like the *Spectator*, which it imitated in style and content. 'Theobald remarked in the preface to Volume I of the collected papers (London, 1717), on the time 'when the Papers under the following Title came abroad singly' (I. xi). In the final issue he invited readers who 'have been so kind as to think my Lucubrations an Entertainment as they came out single. ... in my Bookseller's Name, to give them a new Perusal in the Volumes' (III. 243-44). An earlier comment in this issue suggests that the same bookseller, Jonas Brown, 'at the Black-Swan without Temple Bar,' published both the individual papers and the collection: 'My Bookseller, having acquainted me that he has now a sufficient Number of my Papers to compleat his *Third Volume*, I have resolv'd here to fix my Rest, and from this Day shall remain in a state of Silence' (III. 242). We have found no reference to surviving numbers of the separate papers to confirm this inference. But the practice of publishing a periodical in single issues and in collection with the same publisher was not unusual. Both the *Taller* and the *Spectator*, for example, were published in this way.

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